

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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O R 201707Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7341
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USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 09770

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SALT
SUBJECT: SALT AND GREY AREA SYSTEMS

SUMMARY: THE STRATEGIC DEBATE WHICH OPENED, OR AT LEAST SURFACED, WITH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S IISS SPEECH OF LAST YEAR HAS TENDED TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON HARDWARE OR NEGOTIATED SOLUTIONS TO AN ALLEGED EUROSTRATEGIC IMBALANCE. THIS MESSAGE SUGGESTS THAT FURTHER ATTENTION BE GIVEN TO INSTITUTIONAL STEPS WHICH, IN HELPING MEET FRG CONCERNS, CAN CONTRIBUTE TO A RESOLUTION OF THE CURRENT IMPASSE AMONG OUR EUROPEAN ALLIES IN THE GREY AREA ISSUE. WE WOULD WELCOME COMMENT FROM OTHER POSTS ON THE PRELIMINARY IDEAS WE PUT FORTH BELOW AND ANY INDICATION ON THE STATE OF WASHINGTON'S THINKING ON THIS SUBJECT.

1. SEEN FROM LONDON, THE GREY AREA PROBLEM SEEMS LARGELY TO REVOLVE AROUND FRG ATTITUDES. ITS SOLUTION THUS WOULD SEEM TO BE FOUND IN SOME DEVICE FOR SATISFYING AND REASSURING THE WEST GERMANS. NEITHER THE FRENCH NOR BRITISH WANT NEGOTIATIONS ON GREY AREA SYSTEMS, NEITHER THE U.S. NOR THE USSR WOULD SEEM TO HAVE ANY CLEAR
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INTEREST SERVED BY THEM. ONLY THE GERMANS, THE SOLE MAJOR POWER WITHOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS, HAVE A PERSUASIVE MOTIVATION TO SUPPORT SUCH NEGOTIATIONS. CONSIDERATION OF HOW TO RESPOND TO THE ISSUES POSED BY THE FRG HAS TENDED TO FOCUS ON THE POSSIBILITY OF INITIATING SOME SORT OF GREY AREA NEGOTIATION, IN OR OUT OF SALT, AND/OR THE DEPLOYMENT OF SOME NEW THEATER STRATEGIC SYSTEM

(E.G., GLCMS) IN THE FRG.

2. WITHOUT ARGUING THE MERITS OF EITHER OF THESE ALTERNATIVES, WE WONDER WHETHER CONSIDERATION SHOULD NOT ALSO BE GIVEN TO THE POSSIBILITIES OF AN INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO THE GREY AREA PROBLEM. IS THERE SOME INSTITUTIONAL DEVICE WHICH CAN MEET, IN PART OR AT LEAST, THE FRG'S CONCERNS FOR THE PRESERVATION OF ITS INTERESTS IN SALT III? WE RECALL THAT A PRECEDENT EXISTS FOR AN INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO A SOMEWHAT SIMILAR PROBLEM, THE SOLUTION OF WHICH HAD INITIALLY BEEN CONCEIVED IN HARDWARE TERMS. THIS IS THE NPG, A FORUM DESIGNED TO GIVE THE FRG A SENSE OF PARTICIPATION IN NUCLEAR DECISION-MAKING, A NEED WHICH THE MLF HAD BEEN DESIGNED TO PROVIDE.

3. ONE IDEA WHICH OCCURS TO US IS THE POSSIBLE CREATION OF A NEW NATO BODY, RESTRICTED LIKE THE NPG, THE FUNCTION OF WHICH WOULD BE TO COORDINATE A WESTERN POSITION IN SALT III ON ISSUES OF PARTICULARLY EUROPEAN CONCERN (E.G. CRUISE MISSILE LIMITS). MEMBERSHIP MIGHT BE LIMITED TO THOSE ALLIES WITH NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON THEIR TERRITORIES, PLUS SOME SORT OF ROTATING PARTICIPATION FOR THE REST. THE CREATION OF SUCH A BODY NEED IN NO WAY COMMIT THE USG

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 09770

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TO NEGOTIATIONS ON GREY AREA SYSTEMS. IT IS INDEED POSSIBLE THAT THE EDUCATIVE PROCESS CONDUCTED IN SUCH A FORUM MIGHT CONVINCE THE FRG AND OTHERS THAT THEIR INTERESTS WERE SERVED BY MINIMIZING THE INVOLVEMENT OF SUCH SYSTEMS IN SALT OR OTHER NEGOTIATIONS.

4. THE FRG WAS GROPING FOR SUCH A FORUM WHEN IT PROPOSED FOUR POWER CONSULTATIONS ON SALT IN DECEMBER. THAT IDEA CAME TO LITTLE BECAUSE OF FRENCH OBJECTIONS, AND BECAUSE OF THE INABILITY OF SEVERAL OF THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED TO KEEP THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH CONSULTATIONS CONFIDENTIAL. A RESTRICTED NATO FORUM MIGHT ALSO ENCOUNTER FRENCH OBJECTIONS BUT THE FACT THAT SUCH A CONSULTATIVE MECHANISM EXISTED COULD AT LEAST BE OPENLY ACKNOWLEDGED.

5. A SECOND SUGGESTION FOR AN INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO SOME ASPECTS OF THE GREY AREA PROBLEM HAS COME TO US FROM AN INDEPENDENT, RESPECTED LONDON-BASED EXPERT. THIS IS A PROPOSAL FOR A "NATO ASSESSMENT CENTER." THE ARGUMENT FOR SUCH A CENTER STEMS FROM THE BELIEF THAT THE PRESENT ALMOST TOTAL RELIANCE OF THE EUROPEANS ON THE CONFIDENTIAL

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USG FOR ASSESSMENTS OF THE THREAT PRESENTED BY VARIOUS SOVIET SYSTEMS (E.G., THE SS20) AND OF THE EFFICACY OF ALLIED SYSTEMS LIKE THE CRUISE MISSILE LEADS TO SUSPICION NO MATTER HOW UNFOUNDED, THAT THE U.S. MAY BE SHAPING ASSESSMENTS TO SERVE ITS OWN PURPOSES. OUR INTERLOCUTOR' THOUGHT WAS THAT U.S. ASSESSMENTS WOULD TAKE ON ADDED PERSUASIVENESS IF BACKED UP BY THE FINDINGS OF A MORE-OR-LESS INDEPENDENT NATO SYSTEMS ANALYSIS UNIT.

6. WE DO NOT SUGGEST THAT WASHINGTON RAISE THESE OR ANY OTHER SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS DURING THE UPCOMING BILATERALS ON GREY AREAS WITH THE UK, FRG AND FRANCE. WE DO THINK, HOWEVER, THAT THE INSTITUTIONAL ASPECT MIGHT BE RAISED IN A GENERAL WAY WITH AT LEAST THE UK AND FRG IN ORDER TO STIMULATE AN INTERCHANGE OF IDEAS ON POSSIBLE DEVICES WHICH MIGHT ASSIST IN MOVING AHEAD IN THE DIALOGUE AMONG THE ALLIES ON HOW TO DEAL WITH GREY AREA SYSTEMS.

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